

WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST



September 1, 2005

Wayne L. Hammon, State Executive Director
Idaho State FSA
9173 W Barnes Suite B
Boise, ID 83709

Re: Idaho 2007 Farm Bill Listening Session

Dear Mr. Hammon,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2007 Farm Bill.

The Wood River Land Trust, a non-profit conservation group based in Hailey that works to protect open space, wildlife habitat and agriculture in south-central Idaho, strongly supports the continuation of the conservation programs under the 2002 Farm Bill. In particular, we support continued funding for the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP).

We are currently working with the NRCS on a conservation easement, funded in part by the FRPP, which will protect almost 300 acres of irrigated farmland and almost 100 acres of riparian habitat of the Barbara Farm.

Located in Lincoln County on the northern margin of the Snake River Plain, Barbara Farm is the largest diversified commercial organic farm in the area. The Farm markets beans, potatoes, wheat and seed crops commercially and markets produce to farmers' markets in the Wood River Valley to the north.

The proposed conservation easement, funded in part through the FRPP, will ensure that the working farm will remain under cultivation and will be protected from future subdivision and development. Further, the reduction in land value due to the easement restriction will enable the farm managers, who have lived, worked, and raised a family on the Barbara Farm for over 20 years, to purchase the property from the absentee landowner. The easement, and subsequent property transfer, should be complete by the end of this month.

Similar to many areas in the rural West, development pressure in south-central Idaho increases every year. Cooperative programs like the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program helps keep working family farms productive. These farms supply local food to nearby communities, protect the scenic quality of farmland, and contribute to vibrant communities.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment, and we urge Congress and the Bush Administration to continue the funding for Farm and Ranch Land Protection and other vital conservation programs in the 2007 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

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Stewardship Coordinator

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